



SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Bulletin 01-02

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Student Application & Transfer Request Information

The Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) allows a student with a disability, who meets certain eligibility requirements, to receive a state-funded scholarship to attend a participating private school. The following information, which is based on Wis. Stat. 115.7915 and Wis. Admin. Code PI 49, is intended to assist the SNSP administrators and designees with processing a student's application and transfer request form. The SNSP applications and transfer requests cannot be accepted by anyone other than the SNSP administrator or designee.

This bulletin applies to all 2020-21 applications and 2019-20 applications received on or before November 27, 2019 or after March 31, 2020. The official application and transfer request forms must be filled out completely, accurately and legibly with required signatures. Parents must complete the paper student application form or transfer request available on the [SNSP Student Applications webpage](#). Further information on student eligibility is available in the Initial Student Eligibility Bulletin, Continuing & Transfer Student Eligibility Bulletin, and Residency Bulletin on the [SNSP School Application & Transfer Request Processing webpage](#).

To ensure that each student application or transfer request form includes all required information, the Department strongly recommends that schools use the Student Application checklist and Transfer Request checklist on the [SNSP School Application Processing webpage](#).

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Application & Transfer Request Processing

Application & Transfer Request Receipt

SNSP schools may accept SNSP applications from July 1st to June 30th of each school year for that school year. Applications and transfer requests may be accepted at any time during a school year. Applications and transfer requests must be accepted in the order that they are received except for the sibling preference described below.

- An application is considered to be “received” when the SNSP administrator or designee obtains all of the following: (1) the student’s SNSP application; and (2) the required residency documentation.
- A transfer request is considered to be “received” when the SNSP administrator or designee obtains all of the following: (a) a Transfer Request Form; (b) residency documentation; and (c) the student’s most recent IEP or services plan.

Once the school has received all of the documents listed above to be considered “received”, the SNSP administrator or designee must enter the date received in the “for school use only” section.

Sibling Preference

If a school receives a SNSP student application or transfer request from a sibling of a current student at the school, the school may give the sibling preference over another student applicant. Preference may only be given if:

- The sibling’s application or transfer request is determined eligible prior to the date that the eligibility determination must be made for any student who submitted an earlier application or transfer request; and
- The school has not (a) sent the Individualized Education Program (IEP)/services plan verification email or notification email to the student’s resident school district for any

student applicants who submitted an application earlier; or (b) sent the acceptance letter to any applicants who submitted a transfer request earlier.

Eligibility Review

Applications: Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving an application (21 day verification period) the SNSP administrator or designee must determine if the student is eligible using the application checklist by completing each step before the “For School Use Only Section- LEA Emails” section. This eligibility determination must include determining that the parent/guardian (hereafter “parent”) provided the correct residency documentation.

Transfer Requests: Within the 21 day verification period the SNSP administrator or designee must determine if the student is eligible using the transfer checklist by completing each step until the “For School Use Only Section” section and making sure any required corrections to the application have been completed using the strike through method. This eligibility determination must include determining that the parent provided the correct residency documentation and a copy of the current IEP/services plan. As part of this process, the SNSP administrator or designee must send an email to the DPI to verify that the student was counted on the previous SNSP pupil count report.

If any documentation provided is not correct, the school may obtain the correct documentation within the 21 day verification period. The date received does not need to be updated if revised documentation is obtained during the 21 day verification period. The date received is based on the initial date the required items described in the [Application & Transfer Request Receipt](#) section are received, even if corrections are later identified. If the correct documentation is not provided during the 21 day verification period, the application or transfer request must be determined ineligible.

Eligibility Notifications and Verifications

The school must then complete one of the following within the 21 day verification period based on the eligibility determination that is made and if there is scholarship available at the school.

Eligibility Determination	Steps to be Completed During the 21 Day Verification Period After Eligibility is Determined
Ineligible	Send written notification to the parent. The notification must indicate that the student is not eligible for the program and the reason(s) for the ineligibility determination.
Eligible but the school does not have a scholarship available	Send written notification to the parent. The notification must indicate that the student has an eligible transfer request or eligible application pending the IEP/services plan verification, but the school does not have a scholarship available and indicate the student's place on the waiting list. The IEP/services plan verification email should not be sent to the Local Education Agency (LEA) until the school has a scholarship available for the pupil.
Eligible and the school has a scholarship available	<p><u>Transfer Request:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the letter of acceptance to the applicant. <p><u>Application:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send an email to the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan requesting the LEA send one of the following within five (5) business days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A copy of the IEP/services plan if the student has an IEP/services plan that meets the SNSP requirements; or ○ Notification that the student does not meet the requirements. <p>This email must be sent, even if the school has an IEP or services plan on file. See Appendix A for a sample email that can be sent to the LEA. The list of the public school district special education contacts is available on the WI Special Education Leadership Directory.</p> <p>Send an email to the student's resident school district notifying them that, pending the LEA verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements, the student will receive a SNSP scholarship. This can be in the same email as the verification request if the LEA and resident school district is the same. See Appendix B for a sample email if the LEA and school district are different.</p>

Application Processing After IEP/Services Plan Verification (Applications Only)

Within 7 days of the private school receiving the IEP or services plan from the LEA in response to the private school's verification request, the private school must complete the following:

- Check the box on the application identifying the LEA's response to the IEP/services plan verification.
- The SNSP administrator or designee must sign and date the application, as well as insert their printed name.
- Notify the student applicant whether or not they are eligible for the program. If the student is not eligible for the SNSP, the notification must indicate that the student is not eligible for the program and the reason(s) for the ineligibility determination.

If the LEA determines the student does not have an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements but the parent has documentation indicating that the student does, the parent should contact the LEA directly regarding the discrepancy. If the LEA determines the verification was completed incorrectly prior to the time the letter of denial is required to be sent, the LEA should send a revised verification email with the corrected information. If a revised email is not sent by the LEA to the private school within the 7 days, a letter of denial must be sent out by the private school based on the original email indicating the student is not eligible. If the LEA determines the verification was completed incorrectly after the letter of denial is sent to the student applicant, then the student applicant must submit a new SNSP application to the private school.

Application & Transfer Request Submission to DPI

The school must submit all eligible applications and transfer request forms to the DPI by the next upcoming submission deadline using the submission links emailed to SNSP administrators and designees. The submission links are emailed to the SNSP administrators and designees at the beginning of the school year. The submission deadlines are the 2nd Friday in August, the last weekday in August, the 3rd Friday in September, and the 2nd Friday in January. If possible, the applications and transfer requests should not be submitted until the school has determined if the applicant accepted or declined the scholarship.

If the school completed the eligibility determination after the 2nd Friday in January for an application or transfer request, the school must submit the application or transfer request to the DPI by the 2nd Friday in August in the following school year. The school must use the application or transfer request link from the previous school year.

Agreement of Services to be Provided

The school and the parent must agree to the services that will be provided to each SNSP student. The document must be signed and dated by the parent and a representative of the school.

The school will indicate if the parent and school have agreed to the services that will be provided on the pupil count report. If the school and parent have not agreed to the services that will be provided, the school will not be eligible for payment for the student. The agreement of services to be provided will be reviewed by the auditor as part of the Enrollment Audit. Once the school

and the parent have agreed upon the services to be provided a new agreement is not required unless there is a change in the agreed upon services.

Documentation Retention

Schools are required to retain all of the following for at least five (5) years from the end of the school year in which the student applies or five (5) years after the student no longer attends the school, whichever occurs later:

- a. A copy of all letters accepting or denying any applications or transfer requests,
- b. All applications,
- c. All transfer request forms, and
- d. All supporting documentation received, including a copy of the IEP/services plan verification from the LEA for applications.

The school must retain this documentation even if the application or transfer request is not accepted or if the student declines a scholarship when offered. The *Comparison of Rights of Students with Disabilities and their Families under State and Federal Special Education Law and under the Wisconsin Special Needs Scholarship Program*, which is included with the application and transfer request does not need to be retained.

Corrections to Application & Transfer Request Information

Student Application & Transfer Request Form Corrections

Any corrections to the application or transfer request form are to be made with a “~~strike-through line~~” and initialed by the SNSP administrator or designee. The school must have written documentation to support the change. Any applications or transfer requests corrected with “white-out” will be ineligible for payment. **The SNSP administrator/designee and parent may not make the following changes to an application after the school sends the LEA the IEP/services plan verification email or the email to the resident school district; or to a transfer request after the school sends a letter of acceptance or denial to the parent:**

- Adding the parent signature and/or date signed to the application, transfer request form, or Alternative Residency Form.
- Adding the date received.
- Any changes that result in:
 - The application being ineligible due to residency or status of the IEP or services plan, or
 - The transfer request being ineligible due to residency, the student not being continuously enrolled in the SNSP, or the student having been determined to no longer have a disability through an IEP reevaluation.

Grade Changes

Grade changes must be done by the school while completing the Preliminary Enrollment Report, the 3rd Friday in September Count report, or the 2nd Friday in January Count report. If any grade changes are missed in the count reports, the school must notify the auditor of the required

change. The auditor will include the correction in the September or January Enrollment Audit. As a reminder, a school must have identified that the grade was a SNSP available grade on the Intent to Participate or subsequent School Information Update form prior to receiving applications from parents/guardians for that grade. Information explaining how a school may add a grade is available in the [SNSP Grades Available Changes](#) section.

Other Application or Transfer Request Information Changes

If the school determines either of the following were incorrectly entered in the application or transfer request submission form, the SNSP administrator or designee should send an email to snsdp@dpi.wi.gov with the student name, date of birth, and identification of the information that needs to be corrected:

- The school name.
- The resident school district if the error is identified by the 3rd Friday in September.

If the school determines that any other information submitted to the department was incorrect, the school must notify the school's independent auditor of the required change. The auditor will include the correction in the September or January Enrollment Audit.

SNSP Available Scholarship Changes

Changing Continuing SNSP Scholarships to New Student Scholarships

If a continuing SNSP student leaves the school or ceases to participate in the SNSP, the school has the option to convert the continuing SNSP student scholarship to a new SNSP student scholarship. The school must email the DPI when the student will no longer participate in the SNSP, when the student no longer meets the SNSP requirements, or is accepted at another school. See the Continuing Student Eligibility Bulletin for additional information on when the school should complete this notification. However, the school does not need to notify DPI if it chooses to change a continuing SNSP student scholarship to a new SNSP student scholarship.

SNSP Grades Available Changes

If a school would like to make changes to the grades that are available, the SNSP administrator must complete a School Information Update form and submit the form to the DPI. This may be done at any point during the year as long as there are enough scholarships available in the grade(s) being changed for applications or transfer requests that the school has not determined ineligible and the requirements in the [Changes to the Number of Available Scholarships](#) section are met, if applicable.

Changes to the grades may also require changes to the number of scholarships available if a new grade category is being added or all of the grades in a grade category are being removed. For example, if a school is adding 4 year old kindergarten (4K), it must also complete the number of available scholarships section of the School Information Update form so that it can add at least one scholarship for a 4K student. Please see the next section for information on when changes to the number of available scholarships may be made.

Changes to the Number of Available Scholarships

The table below describes when the number of scholarships may be revised for schools and the requirements to revise the number of available scholarships. All schools must provide an updated School Information Update form to the DPI prior to giving out any additional scholarships. **A school cannot remove a scholarship for which it has already received an application or transfer request, unless it has been determined ineligible.** Schools that are adding available scholarships or moving scholarships to a grade category that has a higher payment amount may also be required to provide a bond/revised bond. If a bond or revised bond is not required for a change, the change may be completed at any time during the school year.

School Description	Required items prior to giving out additional scholarships	When is bond/revised bond required	Last day to make changes if bond/revised bond required	Bond/ Revised Bond Due Date
School had an expected SNSP scholarship amount, based on the ITP, of \$50,000 or more and submitted the surety bond due by the first weekday in June	School Information Update Form	The difference between the expected payment on the ITP and revised expected payment is \$50,000 or more	3rd Friday in September	First weekday in November
School had an expected SNSP scholarship amount, based on the ITP, of \$50,000 or more and submitted financial information that met SNSP requirements	School Information Update Form and, if required, Bond	The difference between the expected payment on the ITP and revised expected payment is \$50,000 or more	Last weekday in August	Last weekday in August
School had an expected SNSP scholarship amount, based on the ITP, of less than \$50,000	School Information Update Form and, if required, Bond	The revised expected SNSP scholarship amount is \$50,000 or more	Last weekday in August	Last weekday in August

Appendix A: IEP/Services Plan LEA Verification Request Email

The following is a sample email that the SNSP administrator or designee can send to the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan requesting verification that an applicant has an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements. The information in brackets should be updated prior to sending the email.

Dear <LEA contact first name> <LEA contact last name>,

This email is to notify you that <student first name> <student last name>, with a date of birth of <student date of birth>, has been found eligible by <private school name> to participate in the Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP), pending verification that the student has an individualized education program (IEP) or services plan that was either:

- Being implemented as of <date application received>; or
- Developed no earlier than September 15, <2016 for the 2019-20 school year or 2017 for the 2020-21 school year> AND the student has not had a more recent reevaluation since the plan was developed that determined that he or she no longer had a disability.

The SNSP application, which was received on <date application received>, indicates that the student <“resides in your district and your district developed the IEP or services plan” or “does not reside in your district, but that your LEA developed the IEP or services plan”>.

Wis. Stat. 115.7915 (2) (bm) and Wis. Admin. Code PI 49.05 require that the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan verify the student meets the above requirement within five (5) business days of receiving this verification request from the private school. **Please reply to this email within five (5) business days with one of the following:**

- If the student meets the above requirements, provide a copy of the student’s most recent IEP or services plan.
- If the student does not meet the above requirements, indicate the LEA has no record that the student meets the above requirements.

If you have any questions, please reply to this email or call <school phone number>. The Department of Public Instruction has a Frequently Asked Questions for public school districts at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications> that has information on the SNSP in general and the LEA’s verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets the SNSP requirements.

Thank you,
<Private School SNSP Administrator or Designee>

Appendix B: Resident School District Notification of Eligible SNSP Student

The SNSP administrator or designee must send an email to the resident school district notifying them that, pending the verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements, the student will receive a SNSP scholarship. If the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan is the resident school district, only the email in Appendix A needs to be sent. If a different LEA developed the IEP or services plan, the email below or a similar communication must be sent to the resident school district. The information in brackets should be updated prior to sending the email.

Dear <resident school district contact first name> <resident school district contact last name>,

This email is to notify you that the following student has been found eligible by <private school name> to participate in the Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP), pending verification that the student has an individualized education program (IEP) or services plan that meets program requirements. The student must either have: (1) an IEP or services plan that was being implemented on <date application received> or (2) an IEP or services plan that was developed no earlier than September 15, <2016 for the 2019-20 school year or 2017 for the 2020-21 school year> AND have not subsequently been determined to no longer have a disability.

Student Name: <student first name> <student last name>

Student Date of Birth: <student date of birth>

Based on the SNSP application, a different Local Education Agency (LEA) developed the student's IEP or services plan. The email requesting verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets the SNSP requirement has been sent to this LEA.

If you have any questions, please reply to this email or call <school phone number>. The Department of Public Instruction has a Frequently Asked Questions for public school districts at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications> that has information on the SNSP.

Thank you,

<Private School SNSP Administrator or Designee>

Frequently Asked Questions

General Application Completion & Processing

1. What information do I need to submit to the DPI for applications and transfer requests?

Schools complete the initial eligibility determination for applications and transfer requests. The school does not submit the paper application or transfer request to the DPI unless DPI specifically requests it. Instead, the school must submit all eligible applications and transfer request forms to the DPI by the next upcoming submission deadline using the submission links emailed to SNSP administrators and designees. The submission deadlines are the 2nd Friday in August, the last weekday in August, the 3rd Friday in September, and the 2nd Friday in January. If possible, the applications and transfer requests should not be submitted until the school has determined if the applicant accepted or declined the scholarship.

2. If the last IEP team or services plan evaluation or reevaluation that makes the student eligible for the SNSP was waived, what date should be inserted on the application as the date of the last IEP team or services plan evaluation or reevaluation?

The date of the last IEP team or services plan evaluation or reevaluation on the application should be the date of the waiver agreement.

3. The date of the last evaluation/reevaluation on the application does not appear correct based on the IEP or services plan. How should I proceed?

If you are unsure whether the date of the last IEP team or services plan evaluation or reevaluation is correct, the school should consider reaching out to the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan to confirm the correct date. The date may be unclear from the IEP/services plan. Confirming this date is correct will ensure the school has the correct next required reevaluation date for SNSP eligibility purposes. If a different date is provided than the date on the application, the paper application must be corrected. In order to correct the date, the incorrect date must be struck through, the correct date written in, and the SNSP administrator or designee must initial the change.

4. When should a parent submit a transfer request form to a new school they would like their child to attend in the next school year?

Transfer request forms, including the supporting documentation, should be submitted to the new private school during the school year that the student would like to attend a different private school participating in the SNSP. For example, if a student is graduating from 8th grade and will attend a high school in the following school year, the parent could submit a transfer request form to the high school beginning July 1 of the new school year. As a reminder, if the pupil has been determined to no longer have a disability, the pupil will not be able to transfer to a different school and retain their SNSP scholarship.

If a pupil is transferring schools while school is in session, the pupil must continue to attend their current school until the new school sends the letter to the parent indicating the pupil has been accepted into the SNSP at the new school.

5. Can parents provide an application or transfer request and the required documentation to the school electronically? Does the school need to obtain the hard copy of the paper application or transfer request from the parent?

The parent may provide the paper application or transfer request to the school electronically. However, once the application or transfer request form is submitted electronically to the school, all changes must be made to the application or transfer request received by the school. The school should only have one master copy of the application. All corrections, if any are required, must be made on this copy. Further, the “For School Use Only” section of the application or transfer request must be completed on this master version.

The required supporting documents (e.g. residency documentation) can be provided to the school electronically. A school can use a pdf, picture, or print screen of a required document as long as the document includes all of the required components and Wisconsin law permits copying of the document. If a lease agreement is used for residency documentation, the lease provided must be a complete, signed lease. The Residency Documentation Bulletin includes information on the required components for residency documentation and Appendix C of the Bulletin includes a summary of documents that may be obtained for SNSP students that cannot be copied.

6. Do the parents’ signatures on the application or transfer request form need to be handwritten signatures?

Yes, the parents’ signatures on the application and transfer request must be handwritten signatures. As explained in the previous question, however, the signatures do not need to be original signatures if the application or transfer request form is provided to the school electronically.

IEP/Services Plan Verifications

7. When should I send the email to the LEA that developed the IEP or services requesting verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements?

If a school has a SNSP scholarship available for the student, the verification request email should be sent to the LEA once the private school has determined the pupil meets the SNSP eligibility requirements other than the IEP/services plan requirement. The email must be sent within 21 days of the private school receiving the paper application for the pupil.

If there are not enough scholarships available for a pupil, the SNSP administrator or designee should not send the IEP/services plan verification email until there is a scholarship available

for the pupil and the school determined it will give the next pupil on the waiting list a scholarship.

See the [Application & Transfer Request Processing](#) section for additional information on the steps in the eligibility determination and verification processes.

8. If the private school already has a copy of the IEP or services plan, does the private school still need to send the IEP/services plan verification email to the LEA and get a copy of the IEP/services plan from the LEA as part of this verification?

Yes. Even if the private school has a copy of an IEP or services plan on file or previously received a copy from the LEA or parent, it must send the IEP or services plan verification email and receive the copy of the IEP or services plan in response to the verification request. The LEA providing the IEP or services plan in response to the verification request is the process by which the LEA confirms that the student meets the SNSP requirements, including that the student has not been determined to no longer have a disability after the IEP or services plan was developed.

9. If a charter school created a student's IEP, where should the school send the verification email?

Independent charter schools are LEAs, so if an independent charter school developed the IEP, the verification email would be sent directly to the school.

Charter schools that are authorized by a public school district are not independent charter schools, and only independent charter schools are considered LEAs. If the charter school is not an independent charter school, the verification email should be sent to the district that that serves as the charter school's authorizer.

A list of current charter schools is available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/charter-schools/current>. This webpage includes a list of the current independent charter schools. It also includes a list of all charter schools and identifies the district that authorized the school.

The WI Special Education Leadership Directory includes contact information for all the LEAs in Wisconsin. A link to this directory is available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/consultation/leadership>.

10. How should the school proceed if the LEA indicates it cannot provide a copy of the IEP or services plan without a release from the parent?

Wis. Stat. 115.7915 specifies that the LEA must provide the IEP or services plan to the private school as part of the application verification process. Further, the parent/guardian signature section of the student application includes a release of any IEP or services plan for the student to the private school for use in connection with Wis. Stat. 115.7915 and Wis. Admin Code PI 49. If LEAs have questions on this process, schools can refer them to the

Public School District Frequently Asked Questions available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications>.

Available Scholarships

11. If the school has a SNSP waiting list and a SNSP scholarship comes available, does the school need to offer the scholarship?

No. However, if the school chooses to offer the scholarship, the school must offer the scholarship to the next student on the waiting list.

12. If the school specifies the number of scholarships available for 1-12 but only has a certain number of scholarships available in a particular grade, can the school restrict the number of scholarships for a particular grade?

The school may internally designate the number of scholarships it has available for a particular grade. If the school has indicated that it has a grade available, it must have at least one scholarship available in that grade. If a SNSP scholarship opens up in a grade that there is a waiting list for and the school chooses to fill the available scholarship from the waiting list, the school must offer the scholarships in the order of the waiting list.

13. How can I determine the number of available SNSP scholarships in the previously submitted ITP?

The Preliminary Enrollment Report includes the available scholarships for each grade category in Schedule 4. The September and January Pupil Count Reports include the number of available scholarships for each grade category in Schedule 2.

Prior to completing these reports, the SNSP administrator must reach out to the head of the governing board to obtain a copy of the submitted Intent to Participate. This will indicate the number of available SNSP scholarships identified on the Intent to Participate. If the head of the governing board is unable to locate the submitted ITP, the school may send an email to snsp@dpi.wi.gov requesting the information.

14. How are corrections made if the SNSP administrator or SNSP designee enters the information incorrectly into the application or transfer request DPI submission form?

The form should not be resubmitted to the DPI. Please see the [Corrections to Application & Transfer Request Information section](#) for information on how changes are made once an application or transfer request is submitted to the DPI.

Agreement of Services to be Provided

15. Are there specific requirements for what must be included in the agreement of services to be provided? How specific does the agreement of services need to be?

There are no specific requirements for the level of detail for the SNSP agreement of services to be provided. Please see the [Agreement of Services to be Provided](#) section for general information on the requirements for the agreement.

16. If the school and parent agree that the services in the IEP or services plan will be implemented as written how should the agreement of services be written?

The agreement of services should indicate that the services in the IEP or services plan will be provided. Please see the [Agreement of Services to be Provided](#) section for additional information on the requirements for the agreement.

17. How often does the agreement of services need to be updated?

If there are no changes in the agreed/requested services, it does not need to be updated. If the parent requests alternative services or if the school determines alternative services should be provided, it should then be updated.